United Nations E/2014/SR.24

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
25 August 2014

Original: English

Substantive session of 2014
Second coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 24th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 13 June 2014, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) ..... (Republic of Korea)

Contents

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(a) Sustainable development

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Tobacco or health

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(c) Statistics

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org)

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

14-55386 (E)

Please recycle

In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(a) Sustainable development (A/69/79-E/2014/66; E/2014/33; E/2014/L.15)

1. **Mr. O'Connor** (Chief, Policy and Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/69/79-E/2014/66), said that, whereas the previous year's report (A/68/79-E/2013/69) had primarily taken stock of how far the United Nations system and its entities had progressed in mainstreaming the three dimensions in their strategies and their operational work, the current report went into more detail regarding the tools that could be used for mainstreaming, both within particular United Nations entities and across multiple entities, and also described the progress made at the intergovernmental level in discussions on elements of the post-2015 development agenda. Since the previous report, the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda had also produced its report, outlining five transformative shifts that were needed to drive the post-2015 agenda. There had therefore been a convergence of thinking around an agenda with sustainable development at its core. The United Nations system must be prepared to support Member States in the implementation of such an agenda, which would require more effective consideration and implementation of mainstreaming. The current report also referred to the role of inspections, evaluations and peer reviews in fostering more effective mainstreaming, as well as the question of how the United Nations system could best support the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

2. At the operational level, various quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms had been established in both the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system entities to ensure a balanced consideration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in programmatic and project activities. Work was also being undertaken to develop coherence and coordination across United Nations entities and regional meetings were being held to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The report concluded with a number of recommendations for supporting and accelerating the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system.

3. **Mr. Ocampo Gaviria** (Chair of the Committee for Development Policy), introducing the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its sixteenth session (E/2014/33), said that, given the growing heterogeneity among developing countries, various country classifications had been established. The least developed country category, created and recognized by the General Assembly, had clear advantages over other existing categories in that it was clearly defined, based on sound analysis and reviewed by an independent body of experts. Many existing classifications, however, relied on weak analytical foundations or reflected particular agendas and those shortcomings compromised the effectiveness of policies designed to address the associated development challenges. For that reason, the Committee recommended greater caution when considering the creation of country groupings for development cooperation activities. In most cases, donors could allocate support based on objective criteria without defining any additional category of countries. In line with General Assembly resolution 67/221, it was strongly recommended that such indicators as gross national income per capita, the human assets index and the economic vulnerability index should be broadly used by development partners as criteria in determining their allocation of official development assistance. It was also recommended that new issue-based categories linked to specific development problems should be created only when an issue was important, deserved a specific set of support measures distinct from any existing measures and required internationally coordinated action to address it.

4. The methodology used for least developed country identification had been reviewed. While the validity of the current criteria had been affirmed, a few refinements were to be introduced. In particular, thresholds for the human asset index and economic vulnerability index would henceforth be established on the basis of absolute, not relative, values. That change would enable least developed countries to qualify for graduation if they made significant progress, independently of the progress of other countries.

5. The Committee had monitored the development progress of countries that had graduated from the least developed country category. Maldives had sustained economic and social progress, despite the redirection of aid flows away from the health and education sectors and the abrupt phasing-out of preferential market access by some trading partners. Samoa also continued to make development progress, notwithstanding recent natural disasters. With regard to countries recommended for graduation, the Committee had identified significant deficits in human development in Equatorial Guinea, which should prepare a transition strategy to address its dependence on hydrocarbons. Vanuatu, meanwhile, was likely to be adversely affected by graduation in the areas of trade and development finance. The Government should therefore begin to prepare its transition strategy and development and trading partners should withdraw specific support gradually, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/221.

6. The Committee had continued to work on the post-2015 framework, with a focus on strengthening global governance to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations development agenda. International cooperation and global governance mechanisms were not working well because the current system was incapable of managing the growing integration and interdependence among countries and governance structures were characterized by severe asymmetries in terms of access to the decision-making processes and coverage of areas of global concern. Such asymmetries contributed to the generation and perpetuation of inequality at both international and national levels. Furthermore, global rules had not provided sufficient policy space for national Governments, particularly of developing countries, to promote the development of their societies and the reduction of inequalities. The Committee had set out five core principles to guide the reforms: common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities; subsidiarity; inclusiveness, transparency and accountability; coherence and responsible sovereigaty. The Council should take a leadership role in the reforms of global governance and global rules, which in turn should be at the centre of the global partnership for development.

7. **Mr. Kantorczyk** (Germany) asked for further information on the mandates and work of the regional meetings related to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and also on their expected outcomes.

8. **Mr. O'Connor** (Chief, Policy and Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), said that three regional meetings had been organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to support the work of the high-level political forum in their respective regions, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 67/290.

Draft resolution E/2014/L.15: Report of the Committee for Development Policy

9. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

10. *Draft resolution E/2014/L.15 was adopted.*

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Tobacco or health (E/2014/55)

11. **Mr. Bettcher** (World Health Organization (WHO)) introduced the note by the Secretary-General (E/2014/55) transmitting the report of the Director General of WHO on the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases. The report, submitted pursuant to Council resolution 2013/12, set out the progress achieved since July 2013 in establishing the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases and developing its terms of reference, including the division of tasks and responsibilities. The Task Force had made significant progress in providing support to developing countries in their national efforts to implement the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020, which comprised a set of actions to help attain a 25 per cent reduction in the risk of premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by 2025.

12. The members of the Task Force had undertaken needs assessment missions to a number of countries to support Governments in their efforts to strengthen their tobacco control regimes and comply with their surveillance and reporting obligations under the WHO

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The Task Force would continue to give priority attention to tobacco control mechanisms and, in the months ahead, would carry out joint missions to support Governments and their partners in efforts to scale up initiatives to prevent and control non-communicable diseases.

13. In partnership with the International Telecommunication Union, WHO had launched the *Be Healthy, Be Mobile* initiative to help countries use mobile technologies to combat non-communicable diseases. Costa Rica, Senegal and Zambia were receiving operational support under that initiative and the Philippines would receive assistance in the near future. WHO and the United Nations Development Programme had also convened a workshop in Fiji on trade agreements and non-communicable diseases to help Member States in the Pacific region ensure that their trade agreements and healthcare policies complemented each other.

14. The draft terms of reference for the Task Force, contained in the report, had been endorsed by the WHO Executive Board and the World Health Assembly. WHO invited the Council to approve those terms of reference and endorse the report's other recommendations.

15. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation attached great importance to the Organization's consideration of issues relating to the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. The Russian Federation had sponsored efforts to ensure that non-communicable diseases were included on the global agenda, including through the establishment of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases. Since reducing tobacco use was an important dimension of efforts to combat non-communicable diseases, he encouraged all interested parties to attend the sixth session of the Conference of Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, to be held from 13 to 18 October 2014 in Moscow.

Draft resolution E/2014/L.13: United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

16. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that China, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan and Monaco had joined the list of sponsors. The draft resolution endorsed the terms of reference for the Task Force and renamed the Council's agenda item "Tobacco or health" to read "Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases", thereby considerably broadening the range of issues that it addressed. The draft resolution, which could be adopted by consensus, would provide further momentum to efforts to implement the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020, and the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases.

17. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Council) announced that Serbia had joined the sponsors.

18. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications and recalled that it had been issued in all languages only that morning. He took it that the Council wished to waive rule 54 of the rules of procedure in order not to delay its adoption.

19. *It was so decided.*

20. *Draft resolution E/2014/L.13 was adopted.*

The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at noon.

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(c) Statistics (E/2014/24-E/CN.3/2014/35)

21. **Ms. Vukovich** (Observer for Hungary), Vice-Chair of the Statistical Commission, speaking via video link from Budapest, introduced the report on the forty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission (E/2014/24-E/CN.3/2014/35). Reviewing a number of key issues covered in the report, she said that the Commission had called upon the Friends of the Chair, which had been working closely with the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, to continue providing statistical support to facilitate the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The Commission had also endorsed the proposed work programme of the Friends of the Chair, which included the development of an implementation framework for the monitoring and measurement of the post-2015 development agenda in partnership and coordination with countries, regional and international organizations, other relevant stakeholders and donors.

22. The Commission was also seeking to address gaps in the data available on certain countries, most of them

in the developing world. Without high-quality statistics, it would prove extremely difficult for countries to sustain development; policymakers were therefore strongly urged to involve statisticians in the process of formulating development policies. The Commission had also discussed issues related to the "data revolution" and evidence-based decision-making, including the need to strengthen and invest in countries' data gathering and analysis capacities, modernize statistical institutions' methodologies, develop new indicators, particularly in the fields of inequality and governance, and ensure that all stakeholders enjoyed free or low-cost access to data. The latter was particularly important as it would enhance the accountability and transparency of statistical systems. It was, moreover, important that stakeholders maintained realistic expectations about the extent to which the data revolution, including the accumulation of vast amounts of information or "big data", could spur development. Appropriate methodologies for producing statistics from big data sources must be tested and approved before those sources could be used extensively in the production of official statistics.

23. **Mr. González Soca** (Cuba) said that the indicators for the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals should not be based exclusively on the report of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which represented just one contribution to the process. Furthermore, while the experiences of such organizations as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Eurostat and the Economic Commission for Europe were valuable, they could not be universally applied, in view of the differences between regions. Contributions from other regions should also be taken into account and greater input should be sought from regional statistical bodies. Although big data sources could provide vast amounts of information, they were complementary, and could not replace official sources of data. In addition, developing countries would need technology transfer, capacity-building and official development assistance in order to use such data efficiently. Data provided by national statistical agencies should be treated with due respect and Governments had the right to determine how data was accessed by stakeholders.

24. **Ms. Vukovich** (Observer for Hungary), Vice-Chair of the Statistical Commission, said that it was indeed crucial to enhance countries' national statistical capacities and to make use of official statistics when designing monitoring mechanisms and evaluating development goals.

Draft decision: Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-fifth session and the provisional agenda and dates for the forty-sixth session of the Commission

25. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision entitled "Report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-fifth session and the provisional agenda and dates for the forty-sixth session of the Commission", contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-fifth session (E/2014/24-E/CN.3/2014/35).

26. *The draft decision was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.